



PUBLICITY MATERIAL

NGĀ TAMATOĀ

with Rawiri Paratene

Premiere Screening: Māori Television
Saturday 15th September 2012
8.30 PM

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SYNOPSIS/BILLING

New Zealand 1970s : civil rights, womens' rights, anti-Vietnam War...revolution was in the air. This decade also saw a new age of Māori protest erupt as a newly-formed Māori rights group hit the scene.

In 1971 Ngā Tamatoa disrupted national day activities of self-congratulation over New Zealand's "idyllic race relations" at Waitangi. The movement ushered in a new era of Māori assertiveness over cultural integrity and saw tangata whenua make a stand for land and language rights.

Actor Rawiri Paratene has dedicated his life to bridging the cultural divide on-stage and on-screen, both here and overseas. A founding member of Ngā Tamatoa in 1970, Rawiri ventures back into his past and provides an up-close and personal insight into the movement and how it shaped Aotearoa as we know it today.





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PUBLICITY INFORMATION

In 1970, a sixteen-year old boy from the Hokianga found himself among some of the most influential figures in Te Ao Māori at the inaugural Māori Leaders Conference in Auckland.

The Māori activist movement, Ngā Tamatoa, was born out of that hui and Rawiri Paratene became their youngest founding member.

"I was just sixteen, a school boy at Hillary College in Otara, when I joined Ngā Tamatoa," says Rawiri. Those years of political activism helped shape the rest of my life and perhaps helped shape Aotearoa as we know it."

The Māori rights group consisted of mainly urban and university-educated Māori who took offense at the continuing confiscation of land and degradation of the Māori language.

"They were talking brown power; black power; Maori revolutionary front; bathing the streets in blood; in other words the rhetoric paralleling that of the Black Power movement in America." – Ranginui Walker

"There was the full gamut of feelings amongst the group from the totally non-aggressive approach, to the 'let's take up arms, let's have a violent uprising and die for the cause'. And I was one of those who was prepared to die for the cause." – Rawiri Paratene

Over the course of the documentary, Rawiri ventures back into his past exploring the first ever protest at Waitangi in 1971.

The following year, 14 September 1972, Rawiri was the spokesperson when Ngā Tamatoa delivered the 30,000-strong Māori Language Petition.

The documentary's 15 September on-air date coincides with the 40th anniversary of the landmark petition, which saw the introduction of Māori language and culture into our classrooms.



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"There have been some gains, but only one if four of us can speak the language and te reo Māori remains at severe risk of becoming extinct. It's been four decades, why isn't the entire country bi-lingual by now?" – Rawiri Paratene

Throughout the 1970s Ngā Tamatoa forced the issue on land rights and recognition for the Treaty of Waitangi. By confiscation, legislation and sale Māori had largely become tenants in their own country with just five percent of land remaining in Māori hands. The 1975 Land March aimed to halt the alienation of Māori land.

The documentary sees Rawiri return to the capital – retracing the history of the Land March and the Māori Language Petition. He travels to Waitangi for this year's Waitangi Day commemorations and visits Auckland University – where the movement began, also the site of Engineering School Haka which propelled the denigration of Māori culture into the spotlight in 1979.

Rawiri also ventures to Te Urewera for the first time, to catch up with his old friend, Tame Iti, who he spent months camped outside Parliament lobbying for "Māori control of Māori things" during the 1972 Tent Embassy.

During the making of this documentary Tame Iti was sent to prison on firearms charges related to the police raids on Te Urewera in 2007. The fact that he was jailed brings Rawiri to his first protest in years outside Mt Eden Prison.

Over the course of his journey, we share Rawiri's heartfelt reunions with his peers. He'll examine what was going on in New Zealand that meant there was a need for movements such as Ngā Tamatoa and whether their kaupapa is still relevant today. Rawiri provides unique insights as he rediscovers his own history and reflects on how the movement shaped Aotearoa as we know it.

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